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MEMORIALS

OF

LIEUT. GEORGE H. WALCOTT,

Late of the 30th U. S. Colored Troops.

By C. M. TYLER.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

By HON. HENRY WILSON.

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TO HIS MOTHER

I Dedicate

THESE MEMORIALS OF A NOBLE SON.

A WIDOW, SOLITARY FOR MANY YEARS IN HER RESPONSIBILITY, JUST PERMITTED AT LENGTH TO LEAN UPON HIS RIPENING JUDGMENT, AND TO BE CHEERED BY HIS MANLY AND SANGUINE WORDS, SHE SURRENDERED ALL HER BRIGHT ANTICIPATIONS, AND WITH SOLEMN CHEERFULNESS SENT HIM FORTH TO DIE FOR THE REPUBLIC.

IT IS HER JOY THAT HIS NAME IS ENROLLED NOT ONLY AMONG THOSE OF THE NATION WHOM POSTERITY WILL NOT WILLINGLY LET DIE, BUT, BETTER THAN ALL, AMONG THE JUST IN HEAVEN, WHO SHALL SHINE AS STARS FOR EVERMORE.

C. M. T.

World, farewell! Of thee I'm tired;
Now toward heaven my way I take;
There is peace, the long-desired —
Lofty, calm, that naught can break.
World, with thee is war and strife;
Thou with cheating hopes art rife;
But in heaven is no alloy,
Only peace and love and joy.

GERMAN HYMN, 1652.

INTRODUCTION.

The annals of no nation or epoch record more of self-sacrificing devotion, conscientious fidelity, heroism, endurance, patience, and resignation than have illustrated the bloody struggle of our age in America. In the great civil war through which the nation has just passed, the fruits of the culture of Christian institutions have been manifested in many forms. By their chastened enthusiasm, their heroism in camp and battle-field, their patience in suffering, and their sublime faith in death, the Christian youth of the country have been the inspiration of noble deeds and the example for comrades. Taught around pious fire-

sides, in Sabbath-schools, and churches of the living God, the sacredness of humanity, the series of events and the discussions growing out of them preceding the conflict of arms, were sure to quicken their patriotism, their love of liberty, and their sense of justice. Discerning for their native land a glorious destiny among the nations, they were quick to hear the menaces against its life; loving liberty with passionate ardor, they instinctively saw the coming danger; imbued with the charities and humanities of religion, they could not fail to see "poor, dumb, toiling millions" bending beneath the nameless woes of perpetual servitude; and when the echoes of the signal-guns of rebellion resounded through the startled nation, they were prepared to offer themselves upon the shrine of a stern and lofty duty, with a faith that never wavered, and a hope never dimmed

by lost battles. The subject of this memoir was of this class of the youthful manhood of the country. Nurtured and trained in the creed that pronounces blessings on the peace-makers, war, its ambitions and glories, had no allurements for him. In becoming a soldier of the Republic, he was not actuated by self-interest, or impelled by hatred, nor lured by visions of martial glory. Duty was the inspiration of his action. Having known him from his childhood, appreciating his manliness, integrity, and conscientiousness, I secured for him a commission in the 30th regiment of colored troops then organizing in Maryland. I recall now his manly bearing and modest words when he received his promotion, and expressed to me his gratitude for the aid I had given him. "I shall try," he said, "to do my duty, so that you will never regret your kindness to me." I

followed with interest his brief career till he sank beneath the burden duty imposed, — another sacrifice for the country. In the morning of life he went to keep companionship with the noble spirits whose unselfish sacrifices have made the Republic of United America dearer to all its children, — the Christian heroes whose good deeds,

> —— "Through the ages,
> Living in historic pages,
> Brighter grow, and gleam immortal,
> Unconsumed by moth or rust."

HENRY WILSON.

MEMORIALS.

I.

There certainly is a growing distrust of religious memoirs. Devout and sensitive minds shrink from unfolding the inner life too freely to the world, as fostering a spiritual egotism. And it is felt to be almost a sacrilege to invade the spiritual life of others, — to break their silence, and lay bare their sacred intercourse with God.

A second and sounder reason for this distrust is found in the fact that religious memoirs pass, too often, into indiscriminate eulogy. The writer means to be truthful — to give a just portraiture; but, in the ardor

of affection or of admiration, conceals faults and exaggerates virtues.

The writer of these biographical notices appreciates whatever is sound in these objections. He knows full well that thousands of America's sons, who have gone down among the "hosts of unreturning brave," and have fallen victims in this civil contest, deserve to have their history written in letters of gold.

The friends of Lieut. Walcott cherish for him a modest affection. They revere all the good and heroic spirits who have risen up to do battle unto death for the Republic, whose exploits in arms have made this truly an "age of chivalry." They claim no devotion to the Fatherland, no valor, no spirituality of character for him, as above many others; but they feel assured

that a written memorial of so bright and valiant a spirit — of one of such cheerful and uncompromising piety, and so staunch in outward living — cannot fail of exerting a good influence, especially upon the young. Retiring from our lines before Petersburg, entering the hospital to die, his fate smote sorely the hearts of those who knew him. Hon. Henry Wilson, U. S. Senator, — whose interest in the Lieutenant we shall have occasion to refer to again, — remarked, among other words of sympathy, "I am greatly disappointed to hear of the death of George. I have expected much of him; the country has suffered a loss."

The resolve is taken, therefore, to gather these reminiscences together, and to commit this little volume to the charitable regards of all who admire a young Christian officer.

George Henry Walcott was born in Natick, Mass., October 28, 1844, and died in the hospital at Philadelphia, July 10, 1864, at the age of nineteen years and eight months. His father died when he was nine and a half years old. The review of the earlier part of his life will be brief. He was not precocious, — was not preternaturally wise or good for his years. He was a boy of boys. No wise man affects to consider boyhood as commonplace, — as incapable of chivalrous exploit, — of poetry, of philosophy, of anxious forecast. The life of every boy who possesses the stuff of future manhood must be a study for the gravest understanding. No sagacious mind will consider the formative period of boyhood as only a period of vegetation, of frolic, and mischief. Nor is it profitable only to study

the boyhood of such as Napoleon, Canova, Beethoven, and Webster. Let the keen observer write with felicitous style the history of any boyhood, — that of your own son, if you will, concealing his name, — and it may be as thrilling to you as romance.

All boyhoods are original. Our boys have their days when they are heroes, or poets, or orators, warriors and statesmen. There is an eloquent mimicry of most every art and every profession.

It cannot be doubted that the dark shadow which fell upon the home of George, filling it with silence and tears, never wholly passed away. In all sports and recreations, in all his real life and dream life, the edge of that shadow touched him. He was the oldest; he must take his father's place. His mother must one day lean upon his arm and consult

his opinions. Though a child, he became more erect, and turned aside oftener to think. Superficial observers might scarcely detect this inner sedateness, this unconscious stretching up of the life towards manhood. But it gave him an earnest eye, a frank, soldierly manner, a disposition to rise above present boyish disputes, and made him a dignified young judge of the rights and wrongs of companions. Thus, like all boys, he swept the fields, climbed the hills for look-outs, scaled trees and high buildings, and explored the woods to learn the ways of all the animals that haunt there.

The scenery of his native place is charming. The apostle Eliot, in olden time, stood by its silver lakes, upon its rounded promontories, where nestled canoe and shallop, and proclaimed the gospel to the Indians.

A venerable oak still stands, beneath whose roof-tree he often spoke. From its hills can be seen, on any clear summer day, the dome-shaped Wachuset and Monadnock, fifty miles away. The chain of lakes, well stocked with perch and pike, and hunted by many a disciple of Izaak Walton, pour their clear waters into the distant reservoirs of the city of Boston, through a subterranean tunnel large enough to be explored with torches in boats. Here George flung his line into the waters, and bathed, and pulled the oar, or helped to hoist the sail, or moor any of the village flotilla. In fine, he was such a boy as would have entered with hearty sympathy into all the sports of rosy young Englishmen at Rugby, — regattas, foot-races, foot-ball, and gallant dashing on colt-back at hedges. He was one

Dr. Arnold would have rejoiced over; not because of intellectual indications so much as because of the breezy atmosphere of healthful sincerity and manliness that went about with him. He was just the boy to listen to Arnold when, as Mr. Thomas Hughes, author of School-days at Rugby, says, "He taught us that in this wonderful world no boy or man can tell which of his actions is indifferent, and which not; that by a thoughtless word or look we may lead astray a brother for whom Christ died. He taught us that life is a whole, made up of actions and thoughts and longings, great and small, noble and ignoble; therefore, the only true wisdom for a boy or man is to bring the whole life into obedience to Him whose world we live in, and who has purchased us with his blood; and that whether

we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we are to do all in his name and to his glory; in such teaching faithfully, as it seems to me, following that of Paul of Tarsus, who was in the habit of meaning what he said, and who laid down this standard for every man and boy in his time."

George was a fine rider of horses. The writer first saw him mounted upon a celebrated horse well known at our county races. The owners of high-bred horses were ever pleased to place them at his service. He rode with the ease and grace of an English fox-hunter.

He was a fine declaimer. With a clear, resonant voice, a soldierly air, an earnest glance, he made a marked impression upon the audience who gathered at the close of the session of the High School to listen to

the exercises so ably conducted by Mr. Rice, the former preceptor. All was natural and manly, — an entire freedom from the affected tones and the ultra proprieties of the professed elocutionist. An incident may illustrate his fine oratorical power. A festival of the Sabbath-school was held in a grove. At the conclusion of each little address of the boys, a salute was fired from a miniature battery. George delivered his address with so much force, dignity, and feeling, as to win much applause. Two salutes were fired, instead of one, as a recognition of his ability.

The school-days of George rapidly fled. He had his aspirations. He sighed as he thought of college. While others pressed forward in the walks of study, he must turn aside to business. He did not mur-

mur, but entered with energy into his business. He won the lasting confidence and esteem of the gentleman — Mr. Winch — who employed him for three years, and to whom, for his fatherly kindness and succor, he expresses much gratitude in a letter written from Maryland a few months before his death.

II.

The religious history of George dates from May 2, 1863. With all his genial and hearty freshness, his sensitive honor, and the manliness which his father's death had given him, he caused his friends much solicitude. He threw energy into all things: he gave momentum to others. Like all ardent, passionate young men, he felt the power of temptation. Shunning, as yet, dissipation, scorning things low and debasing, his fancy threw a glow about many amusements which stand as ushers with golden rods upon the vestibule of the palace of vice.

It is the old story. Young men are rest-

less, imaginative; vague, irresistible energies are uncoiling within them; they must have scope. Like armed knights, they stand upon the edge of the field burning for high endeavor. Older people put them aside, distrust their wisdom, and retain the enterprises of society in their own hands. Perhaps this is right. The young men of America assume early enough the management of social and political affairs. But the question becomes a grave one, to all who love young men — who admire and never sneer at young enthusiasm, and who realize that it is one of the most potent and useful facts of our nature: What shall be done for our youth in this transition period, wherein, though certain faculties were never more capable, they must still wait for the hardening of their fibre, for the discipline of the

critical understanding? Should we not be able to throw more charm about our American homes? Are there not innocent pastimes — festivals sanctioned by such men as Luther in other times — that may be adopted to make home dear to boys and young men? Are not the English wiser than we in forestalling the pleasures of dissipation by rural sports and by fireside recreations?

It was in the beginning of May that George considered the duty of beginning a Christian life. It is evident from his diary that by the influence of a fair friend, to whom he was much attached, he was led to ask the great question, What shall I do to be saved? On the second of May the writer was invited to call upon him at once, if possible, at his mother's residence. He

was in profound distress. He sank in deep waters, and the waves overflowed him. He could not sleep or eat. The sins of the past seemed to come upon him in armed and thick array. Memories of his ingratitude to Christ seemed to smite him as fierce waves lift up a storm-tossed bark, "when rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail," and hurl it into the gulf again. It was a spiritual Waterloo. It had lasted for days, — a fierce, relentless contest with the Holy Spirit, of a passionate young will that said, with St. Augustine, "O Lord, convert me, but not yet!" God's time had come. The iron fingers of old sins were being broken. The writer, awe-stricken by the evidence of this terrible contest of spiritual powers upon an invisible field, knelt with him, and offered a petition to God that the struggle

might cease, and a full surrender be made, — offering such spiritual advice as seemed best, and then withdrew. In a day or two calm had succeeded storm, and then came the "peace which passeth all understanding." From the hour of this surrender George went forth with the spirit of a Christian soldier. He became a member of the First Congregationalist Church, August 2, 1863, on profession of his faith, with twenty others. August 25, he entered the academy at Easthampton for a single term, before entering the army. A few extracts from his diary will disclose his manner of life, impressions, and progress:

"*Sept.* 29, 1863. — I went to the summit of Mount Tom last evening, in company with some of our boys, and returned this morning, at six o'clock.

"*Oct.* 4. — Another Sabbath is past. The president has preached all day. This is the sixth Sabbath in Easthampton: only six are left. My school-days will soon be over. I wish I could go to college; but the Lord knows what is best for me, and I trust him implicitly.

"*Wednesday, Oct.* 28. — My nineteenth birthday. A beautiful autumnal day. The sun shines warmly into the windows; not a cloud visible. What a year it has been! What *can* be in store for me the coming year? God has been good to me. In this year just gone he has revealed to me my danger, and caused me to turn to him before it was too late. I am a Christian. O Father! help me, at the commencement of another year of my life, to form new resolutions, and to live more holily, and to do my duty at all times. Make me to feel that thine eye is ever upon me, and without thee I can do nothing. Help me to grow in grace. In thee do I place my trust.

"*Wednesday, Nov.* 4. — On Monday eve we had a torch-light procession: speeches by President Henshaw, Professor Hubbard, Hon. Mr.

Williston, Dr. Blanchard, President of Wheaton College, Ill., Dr. Seelye, and others. To-day I have walked to the summit of Mount Holyoke, and back, *via* State Hospital and South Hadley.

"*Nov.* 7. — To Northampton to-day. Saw a pair of oxen of enormous weight, — over four tons. To prayer-meeting on Thursday eve. I love to go into the house of the Lord. I should not wish to live without God. Praise the Lord, O my soul!

"*Nov.* 8. — A delightful Sabbath. A prayer-meeting was holden in my room this afternoon. G. and F. declared their intention to live for the Lord Jesus Christ. I rejoice that I am a Christian.

"*Nov.* 10. — Another glorious day. A meeting in the chapel. H., of Kansas, and B., of Vermont, and W., of Pennsylvania, have resolved to become the disciples of Christ. I resign myself wholly to him. He doeth all things well.

"*Nov.* 11. — A meeting in my room. S., of Savannah, Georgia, and several others, rose and

spoke of consecrating themselves. The Lord is with us, and will bless us. Exchanged hats with D., of Pennsylvania, who desires me to remember him by it. He is a good fellow, and has become a Christian. His parents are Quakers.

"*Nov.* 14. — Next Saturday shall be at home, *Deo volente.* I descended a shaft into the lead mines to-day, advancing about half a mile into the tunnel. A meeting for prayer: new evidences of the goodness of the Lord.

"*Sabbath, Nov.* 15. — The last Sabbath for me in Easthampton has gone. Have heard Dr. Seelye for the last time. Have been thinking of E. to-day. Grant, Father, that she may remember her promise to pray daily for me. Amen.

"*Nov.* 18. — I have been jolly to-day. Have been around with R. to bid the boys good-by, and have been frolicking generally."

All the while George was at Easthampton he commended himself as the prince of good fellows. Frank, honorable, decisive,

he carried his religion as a healthful element everywhere with him. He was foremost in sports, and by his ringing laugh and manly bearing rendered his society indispensable.

Meanwhile, the fires of patriotism were kindling within him. In his correspondence with his mother he was preparing her for a new career. Every bulletin from the army thrilled him, and confirmed his resolve to enter the ranks of his country's defenders. His mother justly recoiled from this surrender of her oldest son, upon whose arm alone she could lean, and who was her confidant. But she interposed no obstacles, uttered no syllable to chill his patriotic fervor. With tears she accepted the fact, and prepared to meet it. He writes, under date of Nov. 13, 1863 :

"I know you are a good, kind mother. You must be a Spartan mother. I am resolved that the grand aims of my life shall be my God, truth, and my country. I wish to buckle on the armor: I must."

Under date of Oct. 28, 1863, he wrote a letter which rings with bugle note:

"MOTHER DEAR: — I received your letter, and was glad. To-day is my birthday. I am now old enough, strong enough, willing enough to do something for my country. Abraham Lincoln has called for three hundred thousand more. The brave who have gone send up a cry for help, that all may not be lost. Shall not that call be heard? What future is there for a young man if this rebellion is not crushed? Mother, I must go. Emma has one to care for her. The boys can all cut their way, except Fred. Do not think this a romantic impulse; all that has passed. I wish to blend my efforts with others to do what I can for *my country*, for humanity, and for my

God. He can protect me on the battle-field as well as at home. He will *never desert* me. If he shall see fit to call me home — then *there* is no more sorrow. Mother, ask God to direct you. I have prayed to know my duty.

Your affectionate

GEORGE."

III.

GEORGE has enlisted. His journal opens with the year 1864; and he is in the camp of instruction, upon Long Island, in the harbor of Boston. Gen. Meade's army lies now in its winter cantonments, in the form of a sickle, between Alexandria and Culpepper. The handle of the sickle — the Fifth Corps — runs parallel with the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, which it guards from guerillas. The blade of the sickle springs away at Beverly Ford toward Madison Court House, round by Culpepper and Raccoon Ford, and the point stretches towards Fredericksburg. The affair of Mine Run is over, and Meade and Lee lie await-

ing the spring, and observing each other. Gen. Grant is coming from the Cumberland to examine military charts with the Secretary of War and the President, and to project the sanguinary but victorious campaign of '64. Young warriors are hurrying forward, from North and East and West, to the different regiments and corps, in squads of twenties and fifties and hundreds. Gallant hosts are mustering from every hillside and valley and city, — many of them, alas! to fall in battle.

"*Sabbath, Jan.* 3. — What a Sabbath! — my first in camp. The men seem to have forgotten the day. The Lord be merciful unto us! I shall be glad to reach the regiment. For all that, I enjoy soldiering.

"*Jan.* 8. — How different these from my school-days! O God! keep me in the right path.

"*Jan.* 9. — Still on Long Island. A letter came to-day from Cousin Amelia.

"*Jan.* 10. — I hope I shall not lapse into the bad ways of army life. God helping me, I *won't.* The Lord is my help. In him do I put my trust.

"*Jan.* 13. — To-day we have been drilled. Supped with J. A., who goes to-morrow to Charleston, S. C. Mr. Hazeltine goes to Washington to-day."

Mr. Hazeltine was a noble man, of commanding figure, finely chiselled features and flowing beard, who united with the church on the same morning with George, and who fell during the summer, in one of the battles of June, before Richmond.

"*Jan.* 18. — Left Long Island at 1.30, with three days' rations. At 6.30 P. M., in the cars, and off for Dixie.

"*Jan.* 19. — At 9.15, at Jersey City. Stopped at Newport, R. I., over night. To New York to-day, and over the ferry.

"*Jan.* 20. — Somewhere in New Jersey. Left Jersey City last night at 12 o'clock. At 2.15, P. M., we are at Philadelphia: all in cattle-cars, and waiting to start for Baltimore.

"*Jan.* 21. — In barracks at Baltimore, and have slept soundly.

"*Jan.* 23. — Alexandria, Va. In 'Soldiers' Rest.' The weather is like northern March. I sit upon the ground."

"Alexandria, Va., Jan. 22, 1861.

"My Dear Mother: . . . . . I had heard of *Virginia mud:* I am acquainted with it now. Soldiers' Rest is a beautiful place, — a long white building for our barracks, another in which to eat, another for washing, and others still for purposes I know not; the whole surrounded by a high whitewashed fence. Last night a gentleman of the Sanitary Commission entered the barracks and gave us some soldiers' hymn-books, then addressed us upon the subject so dear to us.

"It is a lovely moonlight night. I can hear the

distant cars running to the front. I shall get my gun this afternoon. Herman and I camped down together last evening upon the floor, using our knapsacks for pillows. We snoozed away most soundly. We marched across Washington City on our route hither *three* times. It would not have been *military* if we had not slung our knapsacks and stood an hour or two, or perhaps half a day. Some grumble, but I expect this, and laugh while others scold.

"Mother, it would be useless, I suppose, to ask you not to worry about me; but it will do no good to be over-anxious. Even if I never return, it will be *all right*. God knows best. We can and must trust him. I feel safe in his hands. Be cheerful, mother; for all things work together for good to them that love God. . . . .

"I am resolved to rise early daily, and to be a first-class soldier, and do my duty faithfully in every capacity, private or official. I shall be strict, but kind. Every officer should have been first a private. Discipline is the thing for an army! You know my history. Mr. Winch is

not a bad disciplinarian: to be with him and not come to time, is impossible. I hope to show myself to be made of good stuff, and to resemble my mother. My health and courage are both good — the latter better, perhaps, than it will be when I get before the enemy. I am not homesick. I love my home; there is none better; but I am doing my duty.

Affectionately,

GEORGE."

"CAMP 22d REG., BEVERLY FORD,
"Rappahannock River, Va.

"*Jan.* 26. — Now I am really in the army, I must try and live up to my religious principles, and, *God helping me, I will.*

"*Jan.* 30. — One week in Virginia. I write in the woods, waiting to go on my post from nine o'clock to twelve to-night. We expect a guerilla raid. We will give them a warm reception.

"*Feb.* 1. — Came in from picket, tired and dirty. Col. Sherwin sent for me, and gave me papers from Washington. I am to be examined

before Casey's Board for a commission. A letter from mother."

Through the kindness of Senator Wilson, George found himself in Washington February 6, and dined at the senator's hotel with his family. Senator Wilson procured an extension of his furlough, and gave him a recommendation to Gen. Casey. Upon the 9th he was examined. On the 10th he listened to speeches in the Senate and House, and explored the Capitol, returning to Beverly Ford on the 11th to await the results of examination before Casey's Board.

"*Feb.* 11. — Reached Rappahannock Station at two o'clock, P. M., and marched to camp. Attended the prayer-meeting in the chapel of the 22d regiment. The colonel and other officers were present."

The writer of these memoirs was chap-

lain of the 22d regiment, and the pastor of George in Massachusetts. He was received with great courtesy by Gen. Tilton and Col. Sherwin, and a chapel was at once erected, of considerable architectural attractions. The logs were jointed into the shape of sloping Gothic buttresses. There was a vestibule or porch, a neat gallery, supported by sturdy brackets, a platform and pulpit; the walls were festooned with Virginia green. Seats, hewed from logs, were all around, leaving a centre aisle. Division and brigade generals, with their staffs, came to worship; and fair ladies from Philadelphia and New York, from Maine and Massachusetts, blended their voices with the choir organized by Col. Sherwin. Officers came in full dress, as a mark of reverence, and soldiers wore their side-arms.

Many a noble heart that sighed upward in prayer, and many voices of dear Christian soldiers that stirred us with eloquent acknowledgments of the love of Christ, were in a few months to be forever silenced amid the carnage of the Wilderness, of Spottsylvania, of North Anna, of Petersburg.

The voice of George was often heard in the meetings for prayer. He was ever the same cheerful, manly spirit, — ready at all times to speak of the goodness and love of his Saviour and Lord.

For the sake of our young readers, we will sketch Virginia scenery and camp life as George found it.

Stand by the chapel upon the hill and sweep the circle. The Blue Ridge rises like enchantment; never was there so coquettish a range of mountains. Yesterday

so near that the gray rocks shone through the purple mist, and you could see the curling smoke of hostile camp-fires of flying guerillas who scout the Shenandoah; to-day they recede, and seem fifty miles away. The eye ever reposes with delight upon the graceful outlines. The atmosphere is an artist, and casts new mantles over them daily. No Flora McFlimsey or Pauline Bonaparte was ever so fickle, and yet uniformly elegant, in her costumes.

Over the Rappahannock are the headquarters of Gen. Pleasanton; further on, the village of Gen. Meade, in concentric circles of rank. Upon the outside an immense stud of horses, well groomed and mettlesome; then piles of pressed hay, high as a cathedral; then the dress parade of camp carriages, light and artistic, for the

general-in-chief and his staff alone; and now the village of Gen. Patrick, chief of provost; then of Gen. Humphreys, who is the "Gen. Gneisenau" of the army. At length you reach the centre of this city of canvas, and Gen. Meade is there the brain into which all these telegraphic lines converge. The immense army lies coiled about him. At a word from him, dense blue masses of soldiers would start from a hundred hills and vales, debouch from woods, and move in columns, converging at every tread toward some field of dreadful carnage. Telegraphic lines, sustained by slender poles, will always guide you from Sedgwick, from Warren, from Sykes, to the centre of the army. Our camp-fires, fuelled with the best of black walnut, remorselessly cut down in these old Virginia forests through which

the Washingtons, Lees, Fairfaxes, and Spotswoods once galloped with hound and horn, are to burn for two months, and the army, like a huge anaconda, lie motionless.

Let us look around us, see how the soldier lives, what gay officers are about, what are the occupations and pastimes of an expectant army.

The scenery has become desolate. Millions of crows — genuine ravens, in suits of ghostly black, that would delight the gloomy genius of Edgar A. Poe — flap about us in squadrons, regiments, corps, and armies. Carcasses of horses lie frequent upon the plains, which these black surgeons have dissected with busy scalpel. You may crack your riding-whip, or discharge your pistol — they only rise a few feet, and flap slowly off a rod or two, in solemn contempt. They cloud

the heavens at sundown, as they return, corps after corps, from a convention about the offal of the camps at Culpepper. All fences have vanished. Heavy caissons and artillery wheels have been whirled in the fury of battle across fields and through dismantled orchards, and stacks of chimneys are scarred and blackened monuments of the past. Old Virginia houses echo the clang of sabres and the thunder of riding-boots.

Gen. Sykes and his staff have domiciliated themselves in the house of a planter, Gen. Bartlett in another, Gen. Tilton in another. Proud Virginia girls are destitute of shoes and bonnets. Lazy planters — some of them despised by their own wives because absent from Confederate service — sit upon their verandahs, very African in dialect, very seedy, and very proud of Stonewall Jackson.

Their walnut and maple forests are melting away; their negroes will melt away too as the army leaves.

The soldier is busy picketing, cooking, washing clothes, playing chess and checkers, and opening packets from home.

Dress parade, band practice in distant hollows, target firing — these are the order of the day. Occasional dashes of fiery guerillas through the lines and up to the headquarters of Gen. Schweitzer, sending his wife into the cellar, and rousing up staff officers in undress to fire their pistols in the moonlight at shadowy horsemen, — sudden ripples now and then upon the picket line wake us in the night, cause the colonel to send his orderly around to officers with a caution, and the soldier turns over to feel for his rifle, and then all is still again.

Enter the hut of the soldier. Its little dome of two or three ponchos flaps in the wind, or is musically drummed upon by the rain. Pairs, triplets, quartettes of soldiers lie like spoons in a drawer, — changing position, when tired, at a given signal, by mutual understanding, and with military promptness. They couch like Turks about the fire, shave by pocket-mirrors, fresco the log wainscot with Frank Leslie or Harper's Monthly emblazoned with imaginary pyramids of cannon-balls, belching columbiads, and band-box colonels and majors riding ridiculously in advance of their regiments, upon fiery horses, into the smoke of war, and carrying, as no colonel often does, the regimental standard. The most expert disciple of Soyer slashes the pork and the beef, turns it upon the coals, or fries the "hard-

tack" which has been soaking over night. Tailoring, cobbling, military discussions, criticisms of generals, in all the confidence of a Napier or Jomini; scouring of bayonets, reading of religious and secular papers, prophecies of speedy movement across the Rapidan, — all these in this microcosm of a few feet square.

Meanwhile gay cavalcades of officers' wives (soon to be ordered out of the army) fly to and fro with military escorts, to exchange courtesies with corps or division commanders.

There are military balls. Suddenly the headquarters of Gen. Bartlett become a bower for a fair Rosamond — with its gateway of green in the form of a lady's bonnet — with its winding avenues. Traitorous planters groan inwardly as bands of

pioneers invade the groves, slashing the firs, spruces, and maples.

Two polished cannon of bronze point down the hall. Eagles and stars of tin, swords arranged in clusters—flashing blades radiating from the centres or crossing each other as if wielded by invisible combatants —festoons of green forming a groined arch as of some Gothic temple, carpets of white canvas all adorn the saloon. There are senators' wives, a secretary's daughter from Washington, and wives of officers from many a state. The band bursts suddenly into a clash of music as a fountain hurls upwards its jet of waters from the pavé of some Alhambra, and crowns of bayonets gleam with their inserted tapers above the throng of beauty.

IV.

The examination of George was eminently satisfactory, and he received a first lieutenant's commission. On the morning of Tuesday, March 1, 1864, the writer of these memorials escorted the Lieutenant to Rappahannock Station, and bade him adieu. On arriving at Washington, he called upon Senator Wilson to receive some funds deposited with him, then left for home before assuming his position in the 30th Reg't U. S. colored troops.

After a joyful visit at home he proceeded to Camp Birney, Md., and was mustered in upon the 8th of March. A letter to his

cousin will afford a sketch of his movements.

"CAMP BIRNEY, NEAR BALTIMORE, MD.,
March 13.

"DEAR AMELIA: — I seize the first opportunity to let you know my whereabouts. I arrived here on the 8th. Last Thursday received orders to report, with thirty men, on board U. S. steamer Cecil. We proceeded to Point Lookout on a recruiting expedition; but on our arrival Gen. Marston would not permit us to land, as we were entering Gen. Butler's department. We remained several hours, and I was introduced to the officers of 2d New Hampshire Reg't. Left the Point at 2 o'clock yesterday afternoon. Had a beautiful sail upon the Chesapeake. We had a race with a steamer. As we marched through Baltimore, the people, on their way to church, observed us sharply, but did not disturb us. How different from three years ago, when the Massachusetts Sixth was assaulted in these very streets! They *fear* the negro soldiers. My regiment is

commanded by Lt.-Col. Oakman, of Massachusetts. I like him. I am assigned to Co. E., Capt. Woodward; Second Lieut. Lewis Datrick. I have a good six-shooter, for which I gave twenty-three dollars; so, beware!

"We have a chaplain, a young man, and graduate of Amherst. He teaches the men to read and to write, and preaches on the Sabbath. While he was preaching to-day, one of the men began suddenly to cry aloud, and kneeled down in the ranks. Not a smile was seen upon the faces of the rest. I hear very little profanity. Generally, the men are more moral than white soldiers. They never grumble: give them an order and they obey it. I would not change my position for the same in a white regiment. The officers are young, ambitious, of good principles, and good companions. Love to all.

GEORGE."

"BROAD CREEK, QUEEN ANN'S CO.,
KENT ISLAND, MD., March, 1864.

"DEAR MOTHER: — I left Baltimore last Tuesday, on another recruiting expedition. While

superintending arrangements for departure, your letter was placed in my hands — the first and only one since I left you. Then came an order from Col. Thomas to report to Capt. Swift for special duty. So we started the next morning on steamer Balloon, steamed down the bay, and up the Choptank along the eastern shore to Easton, Md. When we reached our destination, we confiscated a church to quarter our men in. It is just the place we want. The men are down stairs. Up stairs is a good room, with a carpet and chairs. We have made it our headquarters. Secessionists are very thick. There is one in the room at this moment trying to create a muss. Last Monday we marched through Baltimore, and stacked arms in Holiday Street, before Holiday-street Theatre, on the very spot where Marshal Kane rallied his men, in 1861, for a plot to place the city in the hands of the rebels.

"Capt. Swift passed examination at the same time I did before the Board at Washington, and is senior captain. One of our negroes was shot by a white man a day or two ago; but the boy

was to blame, — he was intoxicated. Do not be alarmed about me."

There is an almost prophetic remark in his diary:

"*Saturday, March* 26. — Another week has passed away, never to return. The time is swiftly flying, and I am nearing my heavenly home. *There* will be no more sorrow. I should like to take a peep into home to-night.

"*March* 31. — Camp Birney once more. Detached from my regiment. I am ordered to take command of Co. H, 39th U. S. C. T.

"*April* 1. — Very busy to-day clothing my men and procuring their rations. Have just received a letter from my dear mother. God is good in giving me such a home and friends.

"*Sabbath, April* 3. — Inspection. I have moved my company into another part of the barracks. It is communion hour at home. How I should like to be there!

"*April* 24. — Between Annapolis and Wash-

ington. What a Sabbath! God help me to do my duty at all times. We have marched all day, and must lie down in the rain. Such is the soldier's life.

"*April* 25. — Virginia once more. Marched through Washington to-day, and saw the President. Have had a tough march."

Everything now converges towards the Rapidan. All along the base of supplies is collected the material of war, and boxes of "hard-tack" are piled high in air, like blocks of warehouses in New York or Philadelphia. A campaign as bloody as that of Wagram or Marengo was before us. In a few days the carnival of war was to open, and day and night the crackling of musketry and the pounding of heavy guns would be heard from the Wilderness to Petersburg. It will be forever impossible to accurately repro-

duce these scenes: the charges of cavalry, — the onset of divisions and brigades, — the fierce contests for particular positions, — the exploits of individual soldiers, which will forever lack a historian, and must go down into the silence of forgetfulness, or be recited, with flashing eye, by scarred and surviving comrades, by future firesides.

For weeks Burnside's Corps had been the gossip of the camp. From Annapolis he could be hurled as a flying column in any direction. By this last week of April, his corps — the Ninth —pushed its advance columns to Fairfax, and began to throw little wisps of cavalry towards Falmouth and Fredericksburg. Lieut. Walcott's regiment was at Fairfax on the 27th, and at Manassas Junction the 28th; on the 4th of May at Catlett's Station, pushing for the front; but where was that to be?

In the Fifth Corps speculations were rife. Should we join Burnside, and storm Fredericksburg? or would he suddenly take transports and proceed up the James or the York? Would Meade attempt to turn the flank of Mine Run upon the left, or seize the inside track around by Madison Court House, crowding Lee towards the sea, and cutting the lines running south?

Gen. Grant soon arrives at Culpepper and fixes his flagstaff in the ground well towards the Rapidan. Taciturn as the grave, his corps commanders, up to the hour when grand divisions began debouching from vales and woods and took direction towards the fords, knew not which way the finger of war was pointing. Reinforcements were added to the Second Corps. The First and Third were blended with the Fifth and Sixth.

Maj.-Gen. Hancock commanded the Second, Warren the Fifth, Sedgwick (alas! soon to fall) the Sixth. The badge of the Second Corps was a lozenge; of the Fifth, a Maltese cross; of the sixth, a Latin cross. A straggler could easily find his corps, division, and regiment.

The scouts of Gen. Lee, from the summit of Clark's Mountain, watched every cloud of dust.

On Tuesday afternoon, May 3, Gen. Gregg pushed his cavalry quickly towards Ely's Ford, and Gen. Wilson seized Germania Ford. Soon an eagle flying from Rappahannock to Culpepper could have seen with his keen eye Hancock, Warren, and Sedgwick all defiling by different roads, by the light of the stars, to Germania Ford; and also, in the early morn, the convulsive start

of Lee's forces as, with yells of exultation, they move rapidly upon our flank. Burnside remains all day Wednesday on the Rapidan, covering Washington. The various corps, pushing with great celerity, arrive at their first bivouac at the Wilderness on Wednesday afternoon, — the Fifth getting into position near the house where Stonewall Jackson was taken, wounded, the year before. On Thursday morning, May 5, at six o'clock A. M., the click of our pioneers' axes in the Fifth Corps is heard cutting down trees for abatis, and to clear the ground to afford range for the musketeers. Generals Grant and Meade are on the ground, and have fixed their flags at the old mill on the Germania road. The army is in position in the form of a crescent, one horn resting upon Germania Ford, where

is the Sixth Corps; then comes the Fifth, then the Second; the other horn resting towards Chancellorsville. Burnside has crossed at Ely's Ford, and comes just in time to fill the gap between the Second and Fifth Corps.

The white troops and a portion of the colored are advanced to the front. The writer saw some of them go into position. A portion of them are halted in reserve, including Lieut. Walcott's regiment. The roar of battle floated back into his ears for two days.

In his diary he writes:

"*May* 2. — In camp at Manassas Junction. I have lived a year for my God. O God, help me to live a life that will be pleasing in thy sight! In thee, dear Father, do I put my trust! Without thee I can do nothing. Save me for Christ's

sake. Bless her through whose influence I was induced to seek thee.

"*May* 6. — Near Germania Ford. Roused at two o'clock this morning. We crossed the Rapidan at eight o'clock, advanced to the rear of the battle-field, but were halted.

"*May* 7. — Roused at eleven o'clock last night, and marched to Gen. Grant's headquarters. The enemy opened upon us about five this morning. We whipped the force opposed to us, then advanced to Chancellorsville."

He passed over Chancellorsville field on Sunday the 8th. It was the first flank movement after the Wilderness conflict. The writer saw the Sixth and Burnside's Corps moving around towards Spottsylvania, but, amid the immense masses of troops, could get no glimpse of Lieut. Walcott.

Let us go back for a few moments to the morning of May 5, and take a glimpse of the great battle that is raging.

Stand in the centre of the crescent, and your nerves thrill at the slightest spasm of battle from right to left. Fifteen or twenty thousand reserves are bivouacked in the centre, making coffee with much nonchalance, or moving in columns here or there to strengthen the reeling lines of fire. The peculiar odor of battle, — of gunpowder and blood, and of reeking horses, sullen clouds of smoke, crisped and burning leaves, — all float back towards you; and little knots of cowardly stragglers walk up to you with an assumed air of courage, and ask you to show them, as soon as possible, the way to their regiments; while others, with slight wounds, sling their arms and wear the forlornest look. But these men are not numerous, and the steady roar of the fight tells of the heroic persistence of our noble army. From out

every copse and ravine, and from hillsides, flow the melancholy tide of ambulances to their various hospitals. It is a dark, mysterious fight. The lines run winding through glens and thickets, along hills and into ravines, where the flash of muskets is the only guide for the rifleman. The deadly strife rages about every wooded height, and in every dark hollow. The waves advance and retire, now overflowing, now shattered upon brave breasts. As you ride forward there springs up a demoniac yell, then splashes of musketry, which in a moment become a rattling, deafening roar, and you feel the weight upon our lines, as if your own nerves terminated everywhere at the circumference of the battle. Suddenly the sound seems stationary ; a deep answering roll of musketry rises again, is wafted from

you ; you thank God for our brave boys, and your blood bounds to hear honest Yankee cheers wind up this repulse of the enemy's charge.

From seven o'clock A. M. of Thursday till sunset the musketry is almost incessant. Artillery is not heard. No batteries can get in position. Lee is straining every nerve, by furious and rapid assault, at horrible expense of the lives of his men, to shatter our lines, destroy Grant's prestige, and inspire our army with fear for the rest of the campaign. The result was the reverse: his own army never afterwards charged with confidence.

The sun goes down upon this field of blood. One hundred and fifty thousand combatants cast themselves wearily upon their arms to snatch rest. The woods are

full of dead and dying. Groans of wounded officers and privates rise upward to the stars. Torches flash through the woods, and there are stooping comrades lifting tenderly the sufferers upon stretchers, or burying them in trenches. Our lines are where they were in the morning. The Fifth Corps has advanced a half mile. Lee has been foiled at all points. *He must* conquer: a *drawn battle* is a defeat for him.

During the night the batteries are feeling out positions, and at daybreak the horrible bass of shrapnel or spherical case — tearing, hissing through the underbrush — will mingle with the treble of musketry. An English nobleman in the army declares it to be the most terrible musketry of modern history. It has raged for fourteen hours. At dawn cannonading commences. There are

tremendous assaults upon the left and centre, and then upon the right. The Sixth Corps yields ground a little, loses Gen. Seymour, and retakes its line. A frightful conflagration breaks out in front of Burnside: the dry leaves and brush burn like tinder. The heat rolls back for miles, and thousands of dying veterans must be shrivelled by this new and cruel foe.

The weary armies rest for breath at meridian. At five o'clock P. M. brigades stealthily pushed forward — again collide; there is an upleaping of divisions and corps, fearful charges, — the terrible roll deepening into ocean-like roar, accented with the heavy peals of Napoleon and Parrot guns.

Again the sun goes down in blood, and Lee is crippling himself in desperation. The charges have been feebler. Yells are

not heard to-day, nor will they be heard again, but once or twice, then feebly, for the rest of the campaign.

On Saturday the conflict at the Wilderness closed. Trains began to move round by the rear of both armies towards Spottsylvania. Burnside's Corps and Sedgwick's Sixth Corps were all day on Sunday, May 8, marching over the old Chancellorsville field. That division of Burnside's Corps which included Lieut. Walcott's regiment was employed (according to his diary) in guarding the flank and rear during the movement, and encountered the enemy on the 7th, and routed them, advanced southward of Fredericksburg, and threw up breastworks, while our army was again grappling with Lee at Spottsylvania.

The writer of these memoirs availed him-

self of the opportunity to examine the field of Chancellorsville, memorable for the battle under Gen. Hooker. The rifle-pits were still there. It was very easy to trace the lines, their advance and retreat. The position of our army seems to have been a good one, and one hardly knows why the enemy should have forced Hooker from his ground.

On the 9th of May, the very day that the fierce battles in and around Spottsylvania opened to continue until the 18th, Lieut. Walcott's regiment was put into entrenchments, still protecting the flank. Momentarily expecting an assault, and compelled to exercise sleepless vigilance, they yet escaped the horrors of the week, and could only listen to the distant roar as it rolled back from Spottsylvania Heights.

"*May* 12. — Still behind the breastworks.

There has been the heaviest fighting to-day of the week: an incessant roar of artillery and musketry since morning. It has rained all day.

"*May* 13. — Still rainy. We marched at six o'clock this evening, and reached this place, five miles from Fredericksburg. It was an awful march, through mud knee-deep, and in the dark.

"*May* 14. — Another week has passed away. The battle is still going on. We are under orders to move to-night. I pray God to watch over me, protect me, and make me pure and holy.

"*May* 15. — In line of battle all night, expecting an attack, — our batteries shotted and in position."

On Thursday, May 19, the fires of Spottsylvania smouldered into silence that was so profound as to be ominous. In the evening a sudden, fierce attack of Ewell's Corps upon the First Mass. Heavy Artillery

and one of the New York Heavy Artillery regiments in our rear partially explained it. This attack of Ewell was, in part, to recruit the exhausted commissariat of Lee, who told his troops that they must capture our supply trains or starve; in part, to cover his retreat towards Richmond. The writer was but three-quarters of a mile distant when the engagement opened. Lieut. Walcott, it seems from his diary, had a share in this handsome repulse of Ewell. His regiment left Salem Church at seven o'clock P. M., upon the double-quick, through woods and swamps, and were soon under the shells of Ewell's batteries. They were ordered to hold the road (the Fredericksburg road, I suppose, over which passed our ambulance and supply trains) at all hazards. The rebels were driven back in the moonlight.

Lieut. Walcott remained there till Saturday; then marched to Guiney's Station; thence, with some delays, to Bowling Green; thence to Milford, Newtown, and Aylett's; thence to Hanoverton on the Pamunkey.

The little diary of this noble and gallant spirit is not remarkable for its literature; but it is nevertheless pathetic, and becomes painful as we near the last entry, written in pencil with a tremulous hand:

"*Sunday, May* 22. — On the march to Richmond. Have marched all day, and expect to march all night. It has been frightfully hot. Oh, what a Sabbath! I pray God to keep me from sin. God bless the friends at home.

"*Monday, May* 23. — Marched through Bowling Green."

Gen. Warren was at this time pushing his Fifth Corps across the North Anna

River, and Gen. Hancock was pounding away at the junction of North and South Anna Rivers, crossing, and pushing steadily forward. The battle of the North Anna, won by our Fifth Corps, was one of the most critical and successful of the campaign.

"*May* 25. — We broke camp this morning, marched three miles, and are now in the woods, encamped a few miles south of Milford, Va.

"*May* 26. — At Milford to-night. My company is on picket, guarding the bridge over the Mattapony River. I have written a long letter to mother to-day. I should like to step into the prayer-meeting at home to-night.

"*May* 27. — We started this morning at five without breakfast: muddy and warm. I have some eggs and corn-cakes for dinner, and shall have a chicken for supper. I am first-rate: never felt better.

"*Sunday*, 29. — On the banks of the Pamunkey River, near Hanoverton, twelve miles from

Richmond. God be praised for the success which we are having! I pray that the war may soon cease, and I may live to see peace once more.

"*Monday*, 30. — Heavy fighting a few miles towards Richmond. Four letters from mother, and two from Amelia, to-day. God bless them!

"*May* 31. — Another month is almost gone, — a month ever memorable in history. I thank God for his goodness. In the woods, on the road to Richmond from Hanoverton.

"*June* 1. — I have a terrible headache. Fighting is going briskly on in the direction of Mechanicsville. I pray God to help me do my duty, and to spare my health and life.

"*June* 2. — We moved a few miles to-day, and are near Newcastle. I am pretty sick.

"*June* 4. — I feel very sick: I shall be glad when I get well. We have not moved to-day. There is heavy firing to-night.

"*Sunday*, 5. — A lovely evening. The chaplain preached this afternoon. It is communion Sabbath at home. I should like to have been

there. Very heavy firing again to-night. Have written a few lines to Amelia.

"*June* 6. — At Old Church Tavern. I am much better than I was yesterday. We moved in the night, and have been throwing up entrenchments. A letter from mother to-day.

"*June* 10. — The cavalry pickets were driven in this afternoon. We were out, but they had all skedaddled.

"*June* 11. — The regiment has been out on reconnoisance. I have been too sick to go, and remained in camp. I pray that I may get well soon.

"*June* 14. — I rode in the ambulance to-day. We are near the Chickahominy.

"*June* 15. — Sick, and lying in an ambulance.

"*June* 16. — We have marched twenty miles to-day, and crossed the Chickahominy at 8.30 A. M. We are now on the banks of the James.

"*June* 17. — Very hot. We crossed the James to-day. I am in the ambulance. The rebels shelled us to-day. . . . . I have been under fire. Crossed at Wilson's Bend.

"*June* 18. — I am very sick; have been riding in ambulance all day. We are near Petersburg."

On the 19th of June the writer rode to the front with Gen. Pearson of the 155th Pennsylvania regiment. On our return we found a division of colored troops bivouacked in the rear of Gen. Birney's headquarters before Petersburg. It flashed upon me that Lieut. Walcott might be found. I soon identified his regiment, but found him not. We then rode to the ambulance train. I called George by name. There was a faint response, then an exclamation of joy, as he roused from a stupor of illness and recognized my voice. A pang of sorrow entered my heart as I looked upon his pale face and eyes that had lost their lustre. He felt sure that he would be sent on the

morrow to City Point, thence to Washington. I left him with this conviction, distressed at the thought that I might see him no more. His surgeon was certainly severe: he should have been sent to the hospital weeks earlier.

"*June* 20. — I am in a hospital-tent. I shall be so glad when I get well!

"*June* 21. — They have moved me from the tent to-night, and have placed me in a house. I am very sick.

"*June* 22. — Still in the hospital. I shall be glad when I get where I can have good care and something to eat.

"*June* 23. — Still at the hospital near the front. We ought to be moved: a shell struck the hospital to-day.

"*June* 24. — They moved us to City Point to-day. It is no better than the other. Shall be glad when I get to Washington."

This is the last entry in his diary.

V.

This history of Lieut. Walcott rapidly nears its close. Before many days, radiant with light and joy, he takes his departure from these scenes of earth. To-day, as I write, the grand armies of Sherman and Meade are passing in review before the President and Lieut. Gen. Grant For two days the serried ranks of brave soldiers are crossing the Long Bridge, and moving along the Avenue. Seldom, if ever, were Napoleon or Wellington permitted to behold so grand an army at one time. Horses and riders are wreathed with laurel; pennons flash in the sunlight; tattered flags excite beholders to the wildest enthusiasm.

Alas, how many gallant spirits have fallen! This triumphal hour has been purchased by myriads of lives. The fields of Virginia, of Tennessee, of Missouri, of Georgia, are broken into mounds, where lie the brave defenders of the Republic. No field or state or country shall bound their fame. "The whole world," says Pericles, "is the sepulchre of the brave who fall in defence of their country."

Lieut. Walcott looked proudly forward to this hour of the triumph of the Republic. Thousands have, with him, passed away whose hearts throbbed quickly at the thought of the homeward march, the last review, — the acclamations of magistrates, citizens, mothers, sisters, and betrothed.

Four brief letters were written by the Lieutenant after June 5. The first two were directed to his cousin in Boston.

"SUNDAY EVE., June 5, 1864.

"DEAR AMELIA: — I am south of the Pamunkey, ten or twelve miles northeast of Richmond. Fighting was going on when I began this note, but everything is still now. From where I sit the roar of artillery, crackling of musketry, and bursting of shells have been heard distinctly. We have been guarding the wagon trains, and protecting the right flank. My strength is failing me. I shall be better in a day or two, and then will write a full account of the past. Love to uncle and aunt.

GEORGE."

"OLD CHURCH TAVERN, VA.,
June 7, 1864.

"MY DEAR AMELIA: — I wrote a few lines, a day or two ago, to let you know I had not forgotten one who takes so much interest in my welfare. I was pretty sick when I wrote, and yet was forced, at one o'clock that night, to get up and march. Should have given out had not the major given up his horse to me. Had I been told what was before me, I should have de-

clared it impossible — marching thus day and night. We left Manassas Junction, May 4; marched until one o'clock that night; started again next morning, and marched until nine at night; halted until two o'clock midnight, then forward again. Crossed Germania Ford at eight o'clock A. M. Friday, 6th. Immediately upon crossing, were ordered to quickly reinforce Gen. Sedgwick (Sixth Corps), who was hard pressed. We marched up lively, the men singing. It was a frightfully hot march through the woods. It amounted to nothing but to tire us out, for we were ordered back again to the ford. We halted until eleven o'clock at night, when orders came to advance. Passed the entire Sixth Corps; marched up a hill, and formed line of battle. Gen. Grant's headquarters were at the base of the hill, in our rear. There were seven or eight lines in front of us. About five o'clock the "Rebs." opened on us, and such a roar of artillery, peals of musketry, and bursting of shells cannot be imagined by one who has not heard it. This battle lasted half an hour. Gen. Grant

sat before his tent, smoking a cigar, as though nothing unusual was transpiring. There were troops enough in front of us, and we lay still all the while, and did not fire a gun. After the battle we were ordered to Chancellorsville." . . .

The Lieutenant details the march to Fredericksburg and to Salem Church, and the double-quick march through the swamps and woods already referred to, to succour the First Mass. Heavy Artillery and New York regiments attacked by Gen. Ewell, — who was resolved to capture our trains, — and the movements of his division towards Richmond and the James. In the closing lines of his letter he says:

"There are many rumors about the colored troops, but probably none of them are true. We have gone where we were ordered, and the fault is not ours that we have not seen more fighting.

"I wish I could tell you, Amelia, how much good your letters do me. They help me to become better. I strive hard to do my duty to my God at all times, and I pray that army life may not make me any the less a Christian. It is good to know that you pray for me. I have written ten letters during the campaign, and these to my mother.

Truly and sincerely,

GEORGE."

"OLD CHURCH TAVERN, VA.,
SUNDAY, June 12, 1864.

"MY DEAR MOTHER: — A letter from you to-day, and was glad to hear from you. I am very sorry you are so anxious about me. We expect to start for James River to-morrow. Should you not like to see me, by the roadside sitting, with a 'hard-tack,' and a piece of raw fat salt pork, and a canteen of water, making a breakfast? We are on the road between White House and Richmond. The regiment has been to White House with rebel prisoners. I was

not well enough to go with it. I thought much of you last Sabbath. How I wished to be with you at communion!

"The 'Johnnies' drove in our cavalry pickets a day or two ago; but when they got to the infantry pickets, Co. A, Capt. Swift, they were checked. The cavalry came skedaddling through our lines. We were ordered out at double-quick. The infantry pickets held their ground.

"It is a pleasant Sabbath day. I write under a peach tree, behind some earthworks. We are to have religious services at four o'clock.

"Cheer up, mother! Good-by.

GEORGE."

And here is the last letter, in a trembling hand, written with a pencil upon a sheet of paper from the army wagon of the Christian Commission, with its imprimatur on the corner:

"JUNE 25, 1864.

"MY DEAR MOTHER: — I am very sick in the hospital at City Point. I hope to be sent to

Washington soon. I can scarcely help myself, so weak am I. If I can get to Washington, I would go home if possible. Do not worry. I have not had a blue moment yet. I left the front, two miles from Petersburg, last Friday. I am too weak to write more.

GEORGE."

VI.

The failing young officer was tardily removed from City Point to Washington. An army surgeon has been severely criticized by many officers for detaining Lieut. Walcott upon the banks of the James, languishing under a terrible disease. A little humanity and vigilance might have saved him for the country and for his friends. It was only by accident, as it was, that military friends got him aboard the transport for Washington. He was sent to the hospital at Philadelphia. His mother, in response to a telegram, flew at once to the bedside of her son. I shall insert her own graphic narrative :

"I arrived at the officers' hospital, Philadelphia, at half-past ten, Sabbath night, July 3, 1864, after a wearisome, anxious journey, fearing that I might not find my dear boy alive. How my heart throbbed, as in that hot summer night I neared the hospital! As I saw the lights glimmering through the trees, I prayed *so* earnestly that I might find him there. I reached the door; I asked for the surgeon; he came; I told him that I was seeking my son. 'Is he here?' — 'Yes.' — 'Is he alive?' — 'Oh yes!' What a burden rolled from off my heart! I had found him, and he was alive! The surgeon led me to George's bedside; he was asleep, but oh! so emaciated that I hardly knew him. I obtained permission to stay all night. The surgeon aroused him; he looked up, and exclaimed, 'O my mother! have you come? How good! how good!' and he threw his arms about my neck, and kissed me.

"I was calm, composed. I saw at a glance that he was very weak and low. I urged him to be quiet and rest, for I would remain with him

and care for him. 'Can you?' said he. 'How good it is to see you!' I asked him if he trusted in the Saviour. 'Oh yes; Jesus has kept me — has been with me all the while.' On the morrow, when the surgeon came, he said, 'My mother has come: please give all directions to her; she will take care of me, and see that I have everything right.' Soon came the chaplain. George said to him, 'My mother has come: I shall now get well.' The chaplain told me that before my arrival he had said that a kiss from his mother would help him more than anything else upon the earth.

"On this day — July 4 — he expressed a strong desire to recover and go home. He rallied a little, and the attendants thought him better. The surgeon gave me no encouragement. George lay quiet much of the time; was not inclined to talk much; asked a few questions about home, and replied to questions briefly. At the name of Jesus a smile would come, and his face would be radiant and happy. It was thus through the entire week; his natural expression had been very serious and thoughtful.

"On Tuesday he was more nervous — was wearied by the talking about him, and by people passing in and out the room. He asked me, 'Do you think I shall recover, mother?' — 'Yes,' I replied, 'I hope you will; but God will do all things well, and we will leave all in his hands.' — 'Oh yes,' said he, 'we will leave all with God; let him do just as he thinks best. I should like to go home again; but, then, God knows best: if he shall call me to my heavenly home, it is all right. His will be done.'

"At another time he said, 'Mother, when I am able, I want to have a long talk with you. I have thought of you much since I have been in the army. I never realized half so much before how many hardships you have endured. Oh, when I am well how I shall love to do for you!'

"Mr. Hyde, a Baptist clergyman residing in the neighborhood, called frequently to see him. Chaplain Alexander Shiras — an excellent man — called several times in a day. He would repeat passages of Scripture or hymns, in which George would immediately join with his voice.

"On Wednesday I could see no improvement. I prayed most earnestly that his life might be spared. I told him that I had prayed for his recovery. He said he would pray also; that God was able to restore him if he thought it best; that Jesus healed the sick, and raised the dead even, when upon earth; that his power was not lessened: he was just as able now as he was then. 'Who was raised?' — 'The widow's son. Perhaps he will raise another widow's son. We will leave it all with him; will we not, mother?'

"At nightfall he was weaker. Mr. Hyde called; offered a short but touching prayer. 'I love to hear you pray,' said George: 'your voice is distinct and strong; I am helped to follow you. I am so weak I can scarcely think connectedly.'

"On Thursday he was decidedly worse. His mind was perfectly clear. At times, on first awaking from sleep, he would make a wandering remark, but on being spoken to, would become immediately conscious. I asked him if his head ached. 'Oh no; my head is all right,' was his invariable answer. He had fever and disease of

the bowels, and 'his chances,' said the surgeon, 'for getting well would be greater were it not for the scurvy which he has. His blood is so poor that it leaks from the veins, and settles under the skin,' — appearing like ordinary blood-blisters. In addition to all, there were large bedsores, incurred by the cruel riding in the ambulances for so many days. Poor boy! he was completely worn out.

"I spoke hopefully to him, anxious to afford him the benefit of hope to aid his recovery. We had spoken much of home, in a quiet way, that day. In the afternoon he was unwontedly restless, and his distress evidently increased. With more impatience than I had before seen, he wished for something to make him feel easier. It was the only impatient remark he uttered. I said to him, 'Georgie, ask God to help you bear your suffering.' — 'I will, mother; pray for me; repeat some hymns, can't you?' I recited

"'Jesus! lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly.'

"'That is it,' said he, — 'let me to thy bosom

fly.' In a whisper he prayed, 'O Jesus! help me to bear my pain without a murmur; help me to be patient; come near to me, Lord Jesus, and help me. I am weak, but thou art mighty, and hast promised to help all who ask thee. Now, I beseech thee, help me!' He became quiet as a lamb. After a little, he said, in a low, sweet voice, 'Mother, do you not think Jesus is nearer to us many times than we think?' — 'Yes, my dear, I do.' — 'Well, mother, he is here now — just close here. He is going to put his arms around me, and *take me to his bosom* — and take me right to his bosom.' This he repeated several times. 'Mother, are you willing that he should take me thus?' — 'My dear,' I said, 'if God can spare you to me, I shall feel it a precious blessing; but I can say, "His will be done."' — 'That is right, mother; "His will be done." Perhaps he will take me to his bosom to-night.' He continued thus for a half-hour, nearly in that same sweet undertone, then began to suffer again. 'O mother! pray for me every minute, won't you, that I may not utter a murmur! I don't want

to make one complaint!' Any one could see that he suffered acutely; but no complaint, no moan escaped him. 'God has a design in this suffering,' said he: 'he does nothing without a reason; and he will help me to bear it. Pray, mother, every moment!' His distress continued for an hour. Then, in a clear voice, he began to speak of the Saviour and of heaven. 'Oh, how beautiful is Christ! how glorious is heaven! Is this death, mother? How sweet it is to die! The room is full of angels! I see them. How beautiful you all seem to me! Mother, I thank you for all you have done for me; and, oh, I thank you so much that you ever taught me to be a Christian! O God! keep my mother from all harm; bless her, and reward her for all her goodness to me.' I asked him if he was in pain. 'Not at all.' Said I, 'What shall I tell them at home?'—'Tell them that I die happy—I die happy! Mother, I shall not live to go home again: I shall die here. It is just as well. Tell all the dear ones to meet me in heaven. Give my Bible to Brother Frank: tell him to read it,

and be a Christian. Give my Testament to Emma: tell her that many a time I have read it by the roadside after a hard day of marching. How beautiful is heaven! My father and sister and many friends are there. Mother, don't you think I will know them there?' — 'Yes,' I said, 'I think you will. There will be no pain there, or suffering.' He smiled at his attempt to sing the little hymn —

"'There will be no more sorrow there.'

'Am I not a fine singer, mother?' — 'Georgie,' I replied, 'they all sing there, and you will sing with them.' — 'Shall I? — shall I? Oh, that will be beautiful, to sing in heaven! Yes, they all sing there.' George was no singer, but ever after he became a Christian he had a strong desire to sing the songs of Zion.

"He continued to converse thus for a half-hour; his eyes flashed with unusual lustre, and his face was radiant with joy. Then his physical distress returned, lasting an hour or more. He besought me to pray that he might bear it

patiently, expressed his willingness to suffer all God's will, and that it was all right.

"All at once his eyes were bent upwards, as though he looked into heaven; his arms were extended, and in a loud, clear voice he said, 'Oh, how splendid! how splendid! I see the Lord Jesus! I see the angels! Blessed Saviour! glorious heaven! There is my father! Where is my place? Ah! there it is! I am going so easily! Angels are about me. How beautiful seem you all! You are all Christians, are you not?'

"The steward and nurses and attendants he besought to meet him above. 'Matron, I thank you for all you have done. God will reward you. You will meet me in heaven, will you not?' He repeated the word 'splendid' many times with great emphasis.

"He continued in this exalted state for a half-hour or more, then sank into a state of great exhaustion. Soon he beckoned me to his side, and whispered, 'I see it all now.'—'What do you see?' I asked. 'I'll tell you in the morning.'—'George, do you think you will live till morning?'

— 'Yes; but I shall not rest much. I shall *suffer*. I will tell you in the morning.'

"He did suffer keenly all night. When we were alone, on the morrow, he said, 'I will tell you now why I suffer, — I can be more useful to those about me in this way. Well, if by suffering thus I can serve God best, I am willing to suffer as long as he wishes. I am ready to go any moment, or to stay and suffer longer — just as he pleases.'

"On Friday his sufferings were intense. I besought the surgeon to give him something to quiet him. He did so. It was the only time he took anything of the kind. Standing, with the chaplain, by his side, I remarked that before George left home he never shrank from his duty, but adopted it as a rule of life to stand up for Jesus, openly and bravely. He looked up, saying, 'Mother, since I have been in the army I am conscious of having endeavored to serve God to the best of my ability.'

"At times, from intense suffering, he seemed oblivious of all about him, and would talk with Christ as though he were present in person.

"On Saturday night this was remarkable. Suffering exquisitely, he said, 'O Lord Jesus, you have promised to help me to bear this, and you will, — will you not? You will keep near me and help me. *You* suffered so much more! and I am willing to suffer all you wish me to do. I am ready to go now, or to stay and suffer longer. You had nails through your hands, and spikes through your feet, and they gave you vinegar and gall to drink, and they mocked you and scoffed at you. But here have I friends to minister to me. Oh! my pains are not to be compared to thine.'

"In speaking of the bright manifestation of heaven he had on Thursday night, he said: 'O mother, I never was so happy in my life. I did not know I could be so happy.' When the chaplain stood by him on Friday morning, he lamented that the brightness was not like that of the night before. 'You have come out of the bright light into the shadow. But Jesus is just as near, though not so plainly seen, and you feel like trusting him the same, do you not?' — 'Oh yes,' he answered: 'I trust him just as much.'

"On Sabbath morning he said that he had suffered acutely during the night, and that he had tried to bear it without a murmur. He *did* bear it without a murmur. Before offering prayer this morning, I read the thirty-first Psalm — the last Scripture I read to his father, the last to George.

"At half-past ten he complained of coldness. We wrapped him in blankets: he soon began to breathe very rapidly. His distress and hurried breathing increased. He commenced to pray aloud — 'O Lord Jesus, help me; help me to bear this O Lord, I beseech — ' His voice broke and failed. He gave me a quick and searching look, then turned his eyes heavenward, and said, in a whisper, 'Jesus is about to take me home — Jesus '— fainter — 'Jesus!' Rapid breathing became long deep gasps, continuing an hour or more. At fifteen minutes before one o'clock, Sabbath noon, July 10, he was gone."

Mrs. Walcott received letters from Philadelphia, kindly giving other reminiscen-

ces of her son. The following are letters from Chaplain Shiras and Mr. Hyde:

"PHILADELPHIA, July 28, 1864.

"DEAR MADAM: — Your letter of the 24th was received last evening. It is my first intelligence respecting you since you went from us a mourner, carrying your dead for burial, two weeks ago last Monday.

"I am rejoiced to learn that God has enabled you to bear up under your grief — to resign yourself to his wise ordering — and even amidst tears to say, 'God's will be done.' Thus does our heavenly Father constantly fulfil his promise, that 'as our day, so shall our strength be.' Thus does our Christian faith, shedding its precious light upon the state of those who 'sleep in Jesus,' enable us to bear what would otherwise be the crushing grief of their departure from us. Blessed religion! which thus takes the sting from death, the bitterness from grief, and the darkness from eternity. What should we be without it? What could we do?

"In compliance with your request, I state with pleasure what passed between your son and me on his first coming to the hospital.

"I saw him shortly after his arrival, — found him in a condition of extreme prostration, but cheerful and bright, — and after inquiring about his health, told him I hoped he knew where to look for strength. 'Oh, yes!' he answered, 'that I do.' — 'You know Jesus, then, as your Saviour?' said I to him. 'Yes; I don't know what I should have done without him in this war.' — 'He has sustained you, then, amidst all troubles?' — 'Yes, indeed he has.' — 'Well, then, you can trust him to sustain you now?' — 'Yes, that I can.' He was too much exhausted for further talk at that time, and so, offering a brief prayer for him, I left him in Christ's keeping.

"The next day he was very feeble, and unable to talk much; but the little conversation that we had showed he was resting trustfully on Christ, and finding him a precious, present Saviour. The mention of the name of Jesus brought a

smile of pleasure to his face; and every allusion to the comforts and blessings of the gospel was evidently welcomed. I repeated to him the twenty-third Psalm, his own lips going over it along with me. At the close he said, 'That's a splendid Psalm.' — 'Yes,' I replied; 'it is delightful to have the promise of Christ's presence at all times, even in the valley of the shadow of death; and if he call you to pass through it, I hope you'll find him with you.' He gave a quick, inquiring look at me, and said, 'Tell me, now, what you think: am I going to die?' I said, 'You are very sick, but I hope not dangerously so. If we can only get your mother here to nurse you, I trust it will bring you up again. But you're ready for whatever may happen, are you not?' — 'Yes,' he said, 'I am ready. It's just as God pleases. He'll do what's right.'

"He was so weak the next time I saw him that he could not converse, but listened, with apparently great interest and pleasure, to some hymns that I repeated; such as, 'I lay my sins on Jesus;' and to the earlier verses of the fifth chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

"You came that evening, and saw for yourself how gently, peacefully, and sweetly God led him down towards death during the ensuing week, — how he scattered every shade of terror from his prospects, — how he filled him with hope of a calm rest in heaven, — and how at last Christ came and took him to himself, that where he is, his servant might be also.

"I rejoice exceedingly that the only death we have had since I have been in the hospital should have been so full of Christian comfort and so bright with Christian hope. And I cannot but hope that good will come from it to others; though I do not yet see the full impression I first counted on.

"The case shows plainly two or three things: First, the sure fruit of a right Christian training. 'Bring up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' You say that you had made it your life work to bring up your children in such a way that they might honor God and do good in the world. And here you see how surely such sow-

ing brings a blessed harvest in the end. You waited, probably, for years for the full issue of that sowing; but in due season came the golden ears.

"The need of early choice of Christ is also shown. Had not your boy sought Jesus while in health, he would have found it very difficult, in the utter prostration of his sickness, to direct his thoughts to him. He had hardly power to *think;* and in his weakness could only just lie trustingly in the arms of the Saviour he had found, assured that *he* would not let him perish, or permit any to pluck him from *his* hands.

"And then, too, how it shows us the power of the gospel to sustain, in view of the great change to eternity! No one that watched your son, as he sank gradually away towards death, could fail to see what support he found in the promises of full salvation and eternal life through Christ. He had taken those promises to his heart and fully trusted them, — he knew whom he had believed, — he was confident that his Saviour would not leave him nor forsake him, and that

God would not fail to fulfil thoroughly his words. And so he rested calmly on the sure hope of life through the Redeemer, and went, in that hope, serenely down the way to death. We cannot doubt that it was to rise, beyond death, into blessed immortality.

"God give us all like faith in Jesus, and finally like peaceful death and happy life through him!

"I thank you for the photograph you send. It is a very pleasing one, and I shall cherish it as a memento of one whom I learned very much to love on earth, and hope yet to meet in heaven.

"Assuring you of the pleasure with which I shall always hear from you, and praying that God may fully console you in your grief,

I am, with great respect,

Your servant in Christ,

ALEXANDER SHIRAS."

Extract from the letter of Rev. J. C. Hyde:

...."Since your departure home, the matron has told me many things he said, and expressed herself very much profited by his words. She

said he was so grateful for little favors done him, and spoke of them so kindly, that she never could forget his words. My dear sister, your dear George is not lost — only gone before. He lived a long life the last ten days he spent here; longer than many who live threescore years and ten. His words will never die. His patience, his resignation, his faith and love, his almost *inspiration*, will never die. I never heard one talk who seemed so nearly inspired — never. His language was so well chosen and so appropriate, his voice so sweet, and his whole manner so triumphant, that I could scarcely resist the impression that he spoke with inspiration, especially on Thursday evening. How thankful ought you to be that you had such a son with you so long, that he died so triumphant a death, and left so good a testimony behind him!

I am, dear madam,

Yours in Christ,

J. C. Hyde."

I give one other extract, from a letter to

Mrs. Walcott from Capt. Swift, his comrade and friend:

"DEAR MADAM: . . . . . I first met George in Washington, D. C. Out of nine applicants we alone passed the Board of Examination on the same day. He passed an excellent examination. Next day we parted; met again a month afterwards at Baltimore, when he was ordered to report to me for recruiting service. We proceeded to Kent Island, Md. We slept together, and every night before retiring he knelt and offered prayer. He observed that I did not, and requested me to kneel with him, and I did so. Every one loved him, even the secessionists. We returned to Baltimore. One Sabbath he heard me swear. About an hour after I received a note with my name upon the envelope. I read it thoughtfully. It commented on the evil of swearing, and was from George. I went to his tent, and told him I would try and swear no more, and be a better man. I think I have tried to do so since. He was respected by all, and was as

brave an officer as he was good. He was taken ill at Old Church, Va. If he had taken my advice, he might have recovered; but he did not wish to leave the regiment, and was sent to the hospital too late. All the little delicacies I could procure I gave him; for which he was very grateful. He thought a great deal of you, his little brother, and his sister. He thought no one equal to 'dear mother,' and would sit hours with me reading your good letters, and talking of you and of his father. Hoping that the thoughts of his goodness will comfort you, and those around you, and that I shall meet him in heaven,

I remain, very respectfully,

C. N. Swift,
Capt. 30th U. S. C. T."

"Near Petersburg, Va.,
Sept. 10, 1864.

"Dear Madam:..... While at Old Church an incident occurred which showed the manliness and heroism of Lieut. Walcott. A dash was made upon our lines by the rebel cavalry. Our

regiment was ordered to support the pickets. No one thought of the Lieutenant going out; but when we had advanced a half-mile I saw him, and besought him to go back; but he said he should advance as long as he was able, if we were going into a fight. We advanced a mile, and halted. I saw that George was exhausted. I again asked him to go back. He replied, 'Do you think I am coward enough to go back now?' I replied, 'It is not cowardly for a man to retire when too unwell to stay.' I went to the surgeon. He sent him back in an ambulance. His was a Christian's life. I wish we had many more like Lieut. Walcott. Of no act of his did he need to feel ashamed. Kind and noble, he was a warm friend and agreeable associate. We are now in the trenches near the Weldon Railroad.

I am, very truly, yours,

L. W. DETRICH,

2d Lieut. Co. E, 30th U. S. C. T."

This closes these memoirs. Let them go forth. These simple annals of a brave

young Christian may kindle in some of our young men a manly purpose and Christian aspiration. Those who knew him will welcome these memorabilia, and deem them, I believe, just and truthful.

The world and the church need *men*, — high-minded, Christian men, like him whose life has here been sketched.

> "O earth, so full of dreary noises!
> O men, with wailing in your voices!
> O delved gold, the wailer's heap!
> O strife! O curse that o'er it fall! —
> God makes a silence through you all,
> And 'giveth his beloved sleep.'"

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